

Forestry in Appomattox County 2019-2020

Forestry is an important business in Appomattox County. Two out of every five people are employed by the forest industry or related field. One and a half individuals with the Virginia Department of Forestry (V.D.O.F.) in Appomattox County manage approximately 155,000 acres of private forestland. Seventy-Two tracts for 4987 acres have been harvested this year in the County. Private Industry harvested 2288 acres and thinned 637 acres. Total harvests for private landowners totaled 1494 acres. Reforestation consisted of 25 tracts for 1151 acres of Loblolly Pine. Nine tracts of Loblolly Pine were thinned for 633 acres. Approximately 343 acres was either left to regenerate naturally, developed or converted to agriculture. In order to reestablish Shortleaf pine in its natural habitat approximately 2 acres have been planted this year. Longleaf pine is being promoted in the coastal areas while Shortleaf Pine is being reintroduced in the Piedmont area. Aerial release of Pine plantations from hardwood suppression totaled 7 tracts for 342 acres. Wildfire is always a threat to our forest resources and to homeowners. Fragmentation creates a new fire hazard as homeowners continue to build homes in the forest. Woodland home protection plans are highly recommended by the V.D.O.F. and are available upon request. Four fires totaling 7 acres have occurred so far this year. Quick response by the fire department and forestry keeps these fires to a minimum size. Smokey Bear is the main fire prevention tool used by the Virginia Department of Forestry. The V.D.O.F. is responsible for promoting fire safety throughout the county and the school system. A Fire prevention program is presented at the Primary School in which each student gets to meet Smokey Bear in person. This totals 22 classes of 650 students. The Department also participates in Little Farmer's Day and conducts a Natural Resource Day in which the students learn about our Natural Resources. Due to the Covid 19 virus, some of these programs had to be canceled for this year. Programs at higher- grade levels are available upon request. The Department works closely with the Forestry teams at the High School and Middle School. Training for teachers to use materials directly related to the Standards of Learning and Project Learning Tree to promote conservation and protection of our natural resources is available. Wildland Fire Training is available to anyone who is interested at our Fire Academy located at Longwood University each year.

Water Quality is a top priority in Appomattox County. The V.D.O.F. monitors all harvesting operations to assure there is an excellent voluntary program of Best Management Practices and no violations of the Water Quality Law. If a violation occurs, the V.D.O.F. is responsible for implementing procedures to see that the problem is resolved. There were no violations out of fifty-five inspections this year. Cost share practices are available to the loggers. Timber harvesters have taken advantage of incentive programs available for thinning small tracts. We should complement the loggers for their efforts in trying to do the best they can in keeping our water clean.

Finally, the Town of Appomattox is currently celebrating its eighth year of being a Tree City U.S.A. member.

The greatest asset that the Department of Forestry has is the great teamwork provided by the County, Town, S.W.C.D., Extension and N.R.C.S. in completion of various projects within the county in which I am thankful.